AGENDA

#	Item	Purpose	Paper	Action
1.	**Apologies**			
2.	**Any Other Business**			
3.	**Minute of Last Meeting**	Approval	Attached	NH
4.	**Matters Arising**			
5.	**Staff Pay**	Update	Attached	SD
6.	**Learning KPI's**	Noting	Attached	SD
7.	**EDI Learning Objectives**	Approval	Attached	SD
8.	**Minor Works**	Approval	Attached	RMacK
9.	**Family Expenses**	Approval	Attached	RMacK
10.	**SCRA Board/Committees** a) June Board - Agenda b) AAC – Agenda QA Report c) PPC – Feedback from last meeting		To Follow Attached Attached Verbal	
	Standing Items			
11.	**Finance and Resource** a) General Update	Update	Verbal	RMacK
12.	**Practice and Policy** a) General Update b) Children's Care and Justice Act	Update Update	Verbal Verbal	AH AH
13.	**Information Governance** a) General Update	Update	Verbal	AH
14.	**Digital Programme** a) General Update	Update	Verbal	DC
15.	**Programme Board Update** a) General Update b) Portfolio Management - Current State Assessment	Update Approval	Verbal Attached	LB LB
16.	**New Risks**			
17.	**Forward Plan** a) LRM Network 14/05 b) H&W Group 13/05 c) NPF 20/05 d) Head Office wellbeing Day 21/05 e) DCAB 22/05 f) Health & Safety Committee 26/05 g) AAC 27/05			
	Date of Next Meeting Wednesday 04th June 2025, Ochil House, Stirling			

**Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
Minute of Executive Management Team Meeting
Held on Wednesday 02 April 2025
At Lanarkshire, Dumfries & Galloway Locality, Dumfries Office**

Present

Neil Hunter **(NH)**	PR/CE
Alistair Hogg (**AH**)	Head of Practice & Policy (by Teams)
Susan Deery (**SD**)	Head of HR
Ross Mackenzie (**RMack**)	Head of Finance & Resources
Douglas Cameron **(DC)**	Head of Digital
Paul Mulvanny (**PM**)	Senior Operational Manager (East & Central)
Helen Etchells (**HE**)	Senior Operational Manager (North)
Lisa Bennett (**LB**)	Head of Strategy & OD
Pamela Armstrong **(PA)**	Governance Officer, Minute (By Teams)

Locality

Jackie Johnston	Locality Support Manager
Hilary Clark	Reporter
Talia Brown	Reporter
Louise Shaw	Reporter

Minute

#	Item	Timescale	Action
1.	**Apologies** None		
2.	**Any Other Business** **Establishment Principles** The HR team is revising establishment principles considering recent decisions and challenges. These principles govern the organisation's structure—covering both core positions (budgeted and established roles) and non-core (temporary or additional roles). The updated approach will ensure decisions are made within clear budget limits. Out with these limits a more rigorous process is needed that involves recruitment, finance, and HR approvals. Reporting to the EMT on these establishment matters will change from quarterly to twice a year. **ITrent Password and Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) Issues** There has been challenges with the new authentication requirements. The new system involves a 12-digit password combined with prompts for specific digits, which has led to login difficulties and system crashes. The		

	team agreed to review the requirements – whether they derive from the supplier and/or known security vulnerabilities.		
3.	**Minute of Last Meeting** Agreed as an accurate record.		
4.	**Matters Arising** **Staff Pay** • Negotiations with UNISON regarding a three-year multi-year pay offer have commenced. The offer has been communicated to staff, and meetings, coinciding with the UNISON AGM, were held to gather feedback. • The process is being coordinated through a Joint Negotiating and Consultancy Committee (JNCC), which will continue to facilitate discussions, resolutions, and any related pay policy decisions. • While the initial offer is under review, if the negotiations seek changes, the approval process will have to restart, extending the negotiation timeline slightly. There is an aim to conclude the negotiations earlier this year than in previous years. • It's also noted that the basic award and progression steps are managed separately from these negotiations, meaning any progression due for staff can be made early in the financial year		
5.	**Managers Event Feedback** • The central Glasgow event (mid-March) broke from the norm of discussing financial constraints or staffing issues. Instead, it set its sights on fostering organisational growth through trauma informed training, the role of managers and leaders, transforming our built environment and embedding digital innovation. • A core segment focused on trauma-informed training sessions supported by input from NHS Education Scotland, explored not only advancements in the training programme but also discussed how to translate those insights into tangible changes in service delivery. The conversation extended into how practices can be embedded into the organisation's culture, making trauma-informed work a fundamental part of its identity. • The digital strategy session (led by DC) outlined plans for:		

	○ Public facing digital initiatives, tailored toward engaging young people and families. ○ Development of digital tools, to benefit both internal teams and external partners. Discussions on emerging technologies such as innovative concepts including "folding space," redaction tool, and 'magic notes' software—were presented. There was an emphasis on tactically employing AI tools to boost operational efficiency and streamline processes. - The event captured a clear shift in attitude toward artificial intelligence. Participants moved from a cautious approach to actively experimenting with AI, for instance by testing capabilities on their phones. - There was a strong emphasis on establishing clear, protected parameters for exploring AI. This initiative aims to balance the creative exploration of AI's potential with safeguards to prevent missteps. - A broader research initiative is underway using machine reading technology to identify risks in child exploitation reports, which is currently undergoing ethical review. - Updated design standards and personalised modifications are being implemented to create safe, welcoming spaces that complement trauma-informed practices. - Overall feedback was very positive. Managers appreciated the blend of strategic leadership with practical insights, which fostered robust networking and idea sharing. - There was interest in deepening these discussions through interactive workshops, pilot projects, and more structured approaches (like deliberate seating plans at events to mix teams).		
6.	**2025/26 Business Plan** LB introduced the final draft of the 2025-26 SCRA Business Plan. **Issues arising during discussion:** - The Business Plan was approved by the Board in March, pending some final amendments. The plan is aligned with both the Scottish Government's Performance Framework and relevant policies. - Feedback from the Board included;		

	o Ensuring that everyone in the organisation can 'see themselves' in the plan – how their role relates to the overall direction – that the language was clear. o Clarifying how the plan links with government strategies such as Scotland's economic strategy and public service reform. **Agreed:** • To approve the final draft of the 2025/26 Business Plan for submission to Minister for noting and publication.		
7.	**Procurement Strategy and Policy Manual** RMacK introduced the revised Corporate Procurement Strategy and revised Procurement Policy Manual. **Issues arising during discussion:** • The update incorporates a fresh perspective by reviewing current developments, upcoming standards, and the latest trends in Scottish Government procurement. • There is an increased focus on ensuring that suppliers are treated fairly. The document emphasises due process and the maintenance of thorough records, supporting transparency, best value, and fair supplier competition. • The update addresses the need for suppliers to have robust cyber-security policies, ensuring sensitive information and financial data are properly managed with limited access. • The revised manual includes updated thresholds for approval processes. These updates give the body the flexibility to apply higher levels of scrutiny even at lower thresholds when necessary, allowing for more stringent assessments in significant procurements (e.g., larger projects such as Dundee). • The equalities questions have been reworked to be more straightforward and relevant. • The manual will be shared with delegated purchasers and other interested parties. It is a critical reference to ensure suppliers are held to the proper standards and policies throughout the procurement process.		

	Agreed: • To approve SCRA's revised Corporate Procurement Strategy in line with the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act) which further aligns SCRA with Scottish Public Sector best practice. • To approve SCRA's revised Procurement Policy Manual in line with the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act) which further aligns SCRA with Scottish Public Sector best practice.		

8.	**Dundee Project Update**
	RMacK introduced the Dundee Upgrading & Smart Working Project report.
	
	Issues arising during discussion:
	• The Property team has been developing options for a significant upgrade to the Dundee building. The intent is to move beyond minimal, smart-working fixes toward a comprehensive renovation that increases the property's lettable space and addresses wider building issues.
	• Consultants have provided recommendations to enhance efficiency and modernise the building. Although earlier reports mentioned measures for reaching net zero such as air source heat pumps, these have been set aside for now due to feasibility and cost concerns. Instead, the project focuses on upgrading windows, and mechanical/electrical systems, ensuring compliance with both original and current building regulations. There's also an emphasis on improving indoor environmental quality (e.g., better airflow and oxygen circulation).
	• The proposal includes:
	    ○ Upgrading the main entry to provide separate, tenant-specific access, potentially creating distinct areas to let to different partners.
	    ○ Ensuring a continuous layout that avoids awkward gaps between tenant areas, and exploring flexible uses for floors such as training, meeting, or court-related functions (reflecting on past uses and current needs).
	    ○ Addressing the building's less attractive aspects by enhancing external appearance, which is critical given its location, a short walk from both the train and bus stations, and near a vibrant waterfront.
	• A notable part of the project is the need to replace outdated systems, particularly the ventilation		

	systems now at the end of their life. Upgrading these critical elements, despite the associated challenges (like dealing with old polystyrene tiling and complex mechanical setups), is seen as essential for creating a quality environment. • The project is viewed as a unique opportunity to significantly transform a long-underused city-centre venue into a more modern, efficient, and commercially attractive property, setting a new standard and potentially offsetting future capital expenditure with increased income. **Agreed:** • To approve the appointment of Space Solutions to progress detailed design work for Dundee along with preparation of tender documentation. • To commit to the approved budget and scope (using the "maximalist" approach outlined in the referenced sections). • To aim for project completion within the current financial year.		
9.	**Standby Arrangements** PM introduced the report on the proposed National Standy arrangements and testing arrangements over 25/26. **Issues arising during discussion:** • There was substantial engagement with UNISON and practitiners to refine the parameters around custody hearings. As a result, the process now ensures that if a child needs to appear outside a police station (in cases where facilities can't be opened), there are contingency measures in place. Collaboration with the police has helped shape the process. The police have confirmed they won't default to prolonged in-custody delays. • The new system is built around the idea that virtual hearings run as "business as usual." A national phone number and digital managers are available to support these hearings, ensuring that there's always backup available without the need to formally designate someone to standby exclusively. This approach lessens the demand on any one staff cluster (e.g., those on the islands) and spreads the responsibility geographically, meaning that even during bank holidays, the workload is more evenly distributed. • Although virtual hearings are the norm (instances of custody hearings on bank holidays have been		

	rare), there are arrangements in place for physical hearings if absolutely needed. • The plan includes having default facilities in locations such as Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen. There is the flexibility to expand this number if service demand increases, ensuring that a child can still be accommodated without compromising their rights. • The process remains under continuous review. While the service has been tested hypothetically, actual custody hearings under these parameters have been extremely limited—only one case was noted during the fiscal period. • An equality and human rights impact assessment was pivotal in this iterative approach, helping to identify potential risks (like unnecessary custody extensions) and guiding adjustments to the proposal. There is confidence that by the end of the year, there may be little to no need for a bank holiday custody hearing, but the procedure will be revisited if demands dictate otherwise. • There's also been discussion about ensuring that cross-locality arrangements are in place (such as with CSAS), so that when cases transfer post-public holiday, there is full access for Reporters across different regions.		
10.	**360 Degree Feedback – Senior Team** SD introduced the paper which outlines an approach for establishment of a 360 Feedback process for the Senior Team and an alternative 360 style approach for cascading to all SCRA Managers. **Issues arising during discussion:** • Currently, the only formal 360° appraisal in place is used for the PR/CE performance review process, which is submitted to the Renumeration and Nominations Committee and reported to the Scottish Government. • The proposal for the senior team shifts the emphasis from a performance-related review to one focused on self-reflection and personal development. This means that rather than being a tool for performance rating, the 360 process would be used to identify blind spots, support growth, and foster confidence, with feedback kept internal for development discussions between individuals and their line managers.		

	• The plan is to pilot a version of the current 360 feedback tool—originally built around an inclusive behaviours framework—with the senior team. • The pilot aims to test whether a modified, self-reflection-focused version of the 360 process can yield meaningful, qualitative feedback without the downsides of the previous approach. This evaluation will inform whether and how this method might be expanded to other managerial levels in the future. There is also discussion about potentially developing or adopting a less resource-heavy method that retains the benefits of self-assessment and personal development, perhaps by integrating more qualitative data into the process. **Agreed:** • To approve reintroduction of 360 feedback for the Senior team aligned to SCRA Inclusive Behaviour Framework and provides feedback on the topics and statements to be included in the feedback questionnaire. • To develop or adopt a less intensive alternative that might include more qualitative self-assessments, possibly offering anonymous results, for all SCRA Managers.		

11.	**SCRA Board/Committees**
	a) ***SCRA Board held on 25 March 2025 – feedback:*** The Board's agenda will streamline as items move to the Planning Performance Committee. A further Board recruitment round is due to commence.
	b) ***RNC held on 20 March 2025- feedback:*** SD provided feedback on the recent RNC, covering items including Genger Pay Gap report and Staff Pay.
	c) ***Board Development Day- Draft Agenda:*** The draft agenda was reviewed and will include the following items,
	  • Cybersecurity Session
	  • Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
	  • Keeping The Promise
	d) ***June Board Draft Agenda:*** The draft agenda was reviewed.
	e) ***Board Report Template:*** Board members have expressed a preference for a more concise report format that quickly highlights essential information.		

	PA to discuss with revised format the Communications team to ensure that specific items are properly incorporated. f) **Board timetable:** The timetable aims to ensure timely paper submissions before key meetings. PA to review the dates of the December and January Board meetings and adjust cut-offs accordingly to account for leave over the festive period.		
12.	**Public Access to SCRA Board Meetings** PA introduced the draft Public Access to Meetings Policy. As a public body, Board meetings are accessible to the public. Attendees have the right to observe meetings and view board papers, although they generally do not participate unless the Chair invites them to do so. **Issues arising during discussion:** • As most content is prepared for public consumption, it's essential to clearly label sections that may contain personal, sensitive, or officially sensitive information. This process is intended to ensure that while most of the material remains publicly available, any sensitive data is appropriately managed and separated. • Further updates will be provided in May following a meeting with the Inclusion & Diversity Manager, to discuss impact assessments. • PA to collaborate with the Communications Team, to enhance the readability and presentation of overarching Corporate Governance framework.	May 25 May 25	PA PA
	Standing Items		
13.	**Finance and Resource** RMacK provided the following verbal update: • **Tenant Write-Off & Year-End Adjustments:** There's a write-off on the books from a tenant who went bankrupt. Additionally, some items remain uncertain for year-end reporting, which will need further clarification and adjustment. • **Finance System Upgrade:** There's an ongoing conversation about whether to invest in a finance system upgrade in 2025. The current stance is to continue with the old system until 2026 to avoid a short-term fix, especially given that the legacy system is carrying only a moderate risk. Discussions with DC are underway to gather more details and strategies to address any concerns. • **Family Expenses Management:** There is a proposal to review the handling of family	May 25	RMacK

expenses. Currently, expenses are managed on behalf of local authorities—a process viewed as administratively heavy relative to the cash involved. The idea is to potentially reassign some responsibilities (or costs such as upfront travel expenses) to local authorities to support their role in the children's healing system. A more formal paper on this issue is expected to be presented at next month's EMT meeting.

- *Revisiting Locality Establishment Budgets*: Approximately £137,000 was previously removed from locality establishment budgets based on assurances that the funds were not required. Now, some leads are reconsidering those funds. 2 options include:
    1. Maintain the board-approved budget and adjust later if overspending occurs.

Reallocate funds from other provisions (with around £150,000 across five localities being considered, including an £81,000 adjustment for Glasgow). The planning process aims to incorporate in-year monitoring and review to avoid the issues experienced in previous financial cycles.

- EMT agreed to maintain board-approved budget for now.
- *Recruitment & Staffing Strategy:* Savings targets previously imposed on budgets have slowed recruitment processes, leading to vacancies and delayed spending. The current approach suggests front-loading recruitment—especially for roles for CCJA—to ensure that teams are adequately staffed at the start of the financial year. This is part of a broader push to keep frontline resources active without being hindered by stringent savings targets.
- *Property Matters and Lease Extensions:*
    o Glasgow Lease: The lease extension has been approved, securing the property until 2039.
    o Upcoming Lease Renewals: Stornoway, Alloa and Thurso require decisions this year, with discussions planned on whether to maintain or alter current terms. HE, PM and RMacK to pick up separately with Head of Property.

Issues arising during discussion:
- *Savings Targets vs. Operational Effectiveness:* While aiming for savings is important, strict savings targets can sometimes impede essential

	functions like recruitment, potentially undermining overall operational efficiency. • **_Practical Financial Monitoring:_** Implementing in-year financial review mechanisms was proposed to ensure that budgets remain realistic, allowing for timely adjustments as circumstances change. • **_Risk Management and System Updates:_** Ongoing dialogue is crucial to address potential risks, particularly concerning the reliance on an older finance system until 2026. Evaluating this risk through scenario analyses was suggested. • **_Stakeholder Engagement:_** A detailed follow-up that includes further property assessments and the development of clearer staffing metrics would help provide additional clarity. These efforts are aimed at informing decisions for the forthcoming fiscal year. • **_Embracing Digital Tools:_** Exploring digital solutions could enhance budget monitoring and decision-making processes by providing real-time insights and improved forecasting capabilities.		
14.	**Practice and Policy** AH provided the following verbal update: • **_Children's Care and Justice Act:_** The CCJA still lacks a definitive government implementation date, with a speculative target around April 2026. Given that the timeline approaches the next Scottish parliamentary election, there's talk of sequencing the provisions—some parts might start earlier than others, whereas delays remain a possibility. • In the interim, work is underway on establishing a new independent service for individuals harmed by children and young people. This work, led by Victim Support Scotland in collaboration with other partners, aims to provide a single point of contact for generic information about the system. Efforts are focused on ensuring the service is both pragmatic and stays within the legal scope, so it doesn't overpromise beyond what can be realistically or lawfully delivered. • A Workforce Development Group has been organised by CYCJ to ensure that local authority partners and other partners are well-resourced to meet the additional demands. Internally, a formal project initiation document has been prepared to address all logistical and resource requirements, ensuring staff are well-prepared, informed, and properly supported when the new provisions go live.		

	• *Hearings Redesign:* The government is expected to introduce a Promise Bill—possibly before the summer recess—with one key change being the introduction of a paid Chair for hearings. Unlike the previously envisaged salaried full-time role, this position would involve a daily fee and might also facilitate a "single member hearing" process. There is also discussion around a new process for establishing grounds. This process may give discretion to the Reporter to determine the best route to take – straight to a hearing where the child and relevant persons agree on the grounds, straight to court if no agreement, or to a single member hearing if there is uncertainty. This is very complex, especially when considering situations where an interim order may be necessray. • The Promise Bill appears to primarily focus on hearings redesign, which may diminish expectations about broader reforms. There is also concern regarding financial implications—especially as the hearing system continues to absorb more legislative changes—and a focus on applying consistent financial assessments across these new responsibilities.		
15.	**Information Governance** AH provided the following verbal update: • *Breach Report Update:* The March report on breach activity will be presented for noting at the May meeting. • *Records Management Policy Review:* The team has completed a detailed review of the records management policy, an essential task that occurs every few years. This task is critical for compliance, and the team's effort was widely acknowledged.		
16.	**Digital Programme** DC provided the following verbal update; • *Digital Programme Manager:* A preferred candidate has been selected, and further details will be shared as the onboarding process progresses. • *Maintenance and Support for CSAS:* Leidos currently provide support and maintenance for CSAS. Their term is ending, prompting a market search to either replace them with a new vendor or potentially reinstate them as an incumbent. A three-month contract extension has been secured		

	(extending through the end of this month) to allow time for the vendor procurement process. • There are plans to arrange introductions with other vendors on the SG framework. This step aims to ensure a competitive environment and prevent overreliance on any single supplier. • *Data Integration and System Challenges:* A pilot is underway for handling concern reports (originating from Dumfries and Galloway), where a report dropped into CSAS triggers the population of referral data. Discussions are ongoing with the police regarding better integration with their vulnerable person database. There's an interest in moving toward a seamless data exchange standard (referred to as SPR), where data would be provided directly rather than through PDF conversion.		

16.	**Programme Board Update**
	LB provided the following verbal update:
	• *Strategic Programmes Group Overview:* The group, meets regularly to review project updates and decide what gets escalated to the Programme Board for approval. The recent all-day session focused on the following areas:
	    ○ *Communication Pack and Target Operating Model:* This package outlines the target operating model with visuals, narrative descriptions, and details of the upcoming project work. The package has been fully approved and will soon be shared, followed by face-to-face team meetings to discuss its content.
	    ○ *Testing and Evaluation Process:*
	       i. The need to evaluate the tests thoroughly before rolling out any changes permanently.
	      ii. How to manage the rollout of improvements while accounting for capacity constraints within local teams.
	    iii. Balancing immediate test successes with the broader, systematic evaluation process so that changes are introduced in a controlled manner.
	• *Planning for Implementation and Risk Management:*
	    ○ The importance of scheduling and capacity planning (including changes in scheduling to allow teams to prepare for court		

	proceedings and manage children's schedules). ○ The risk of trying to do too much at once if multiple changes and tests are rolled out simultaneously. ○ The necessity of detailed planning to determine realistic lead times for different teams, ensuring that the changes integrate smoothly without overwhelming the organisation. • **Next Steps and Broader Implications:** Looking forward, the team plans to: ○ Hold a detailed planning session next week ("field day session") to further assess team capacity and timeline sensitivities. ○ Involve external reviewers to ensure the planning process is sound and that the entire organisation is gradually brought up to speed. ○ Consider related aspects such as central recruitment, training, and clarifying line management responsibilities—especially given upcoming actions around the CCJA planning and the anticipated live rollouts by September.		
17.	**New Risks** No new risks were identified.		
18.	**Forward Plan** The forward plan was reviewed.		
	Date of Next Meeting Wednesday 07 May 2025, North Strathclyde Locality, Greenock office.		

SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Head of Service	**Susan Deery, Head of HR**
Date:	**23 April 2025**
Report Author:	**Patricia Stevenson, HR Manager**

Recommendation:

1. To note the Learning KPIs as at March 2025 and note the increased level of training provided by Head Office and Operational Teams in 2024/25.

Reason for Report:	*For noting*
Resource Implications:	*None*
Strategy/ServicePlan Implications	*People Strategy*
Consultation:	*EMT*
EHRIA Duties:	*None*
Document Classification:	*[Not protectively marked)*

1. Introduction

1.1 The paper provides an update on the Learning & Development Key Performance Indicators for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

2. Learning KPI

Learning Events

2.1 In 2024/25, as a March 2025, staff attended 2917 learning events which equates to 6 events per employee. This exceeds the KPI of 4.0 by 2.0 events per employee.

	Learning Events	Events per employee
2022/23	2095	4.4
2023/24	2377	4.9
2024/25	2917	6.0

2.2 The top 5 areas of training provided this year are:

Type of training	Learning Event	% of Events by Learning Events
Practice	709	24.31%
Health & Safety (Mandatory)	584	20.02%
Trauma Training	507	17.38%
Breach Prevention	432	14.81%
Inclusion & Diversity	240	8.23%

The top 2 Practice Training events were UNCRC and Harmful Sexual Behaviour training (323 employees attended) and Good Decision Making (100 employees attended). The Health and Safety training reflects the mandatory training completed by staff this year as part of the 2 yearly cycle. The data also shows that 90% of staff have completed the Breach prevention training in 2024/25. A full breakdown of the training undertaken so far this year can be seen at Appendix 1 and 2.

PDP Completion

2.3 As at 31 March 2025, 8.54% of staff have uploaded their Personal Learning Objectives to iTrent. Further details on the number of staff who have completed Personal Development Plans is attached at Appendix 3.

2.4 This is a small increase in the numbers reported at December 2024. Managers are being reminded that staff should include their PDP on iTrent Team, and it is recommended that the Senior Team remind managers at Supervision of the importance of staff recording Personal Learning Plans and agreeing learning objectives with their direct reports as part of the Development meeting

Evaluation of Learning Events

2.5 The overall assessment of the evaluations, which includes evaluations on iTrent and for Practice Training, is detailed below:

Excellent	71%
Satisfactory	20%
Mostly Satisfactory	7%
Partially Satisfactory	1%

2.6   With 91% of staff satisfied with learning, the KPI of 80% has been met.

2.7   The process for seeking evaluation feedback on iTrent is established, however the rate of completion by staff remains low. Alternative methods are currently being explored to improve engagement with evaluation.

3.   Recommendation

3.1   It is recommended that EMT note the Learning KPI Data for 2024/5 as at 31 March 2025 and the increased level of training provided by Head Office and Operational Teams

All Learning Events by Category 2023/24

- Inclusive Behaviours 19.60%
- GDPR 18.72%
- Practice 17.84%
- Professional Managers… 14.22%
- Mandatory elearning 9.47%
- Support staff KTP 5.38%
- elearning 3.49%
- Inclusion & Diversity 3.45%
- Operational Development 3.32%
- Trauma Training 1.22%
- Cyber Security 1.14%
- Recruitment & Selection 1.05%
- Induction 0.63%
- Health & Wellbeing 0.46%

ALL LEARNING EVENTS BY ROLE 2023/24

- Head Office 6%
- Manager 25%
- Reporter 39%
- Support 30%

All Learning Events by Category 2024/25

- Practice 24.31%
- Health & Safety… 20.02%
- Trauma Training 17.38%
- Breach Prevention 14.81%
- Inclusion & Diversity 8.23%
- Operational… 3.12%
- General e-learning 2.26%
- Corporate Induction 1.99%
- Health & Wellbeing 1.68%
- Recruitment & Selection 1.37%
- Health & Safety 1.17%
- Cyber Security 1.03%
- Procurement 0.96%
- Coaching & Mentoring 0.48%
- GDPR Refresher 0.38%
- Management… 0.31%
- Skills Training 0.21%
- Management 0.14%
- Data Protection 0.10%
- General eLearning 0.03%
- Digital 0.03%

ALL LEARNING EVENTS BY ROLE 2024/25

- Head Office 12.72%
- Manager 17.31%
- Reporter 44.19%
- Support 25.78%

All Training Events – April 24 – March 25

Type of training	Events - no of staff	% of Events by Learning Events
Practice	**709**	**24.31%**
Practice Training: Advocacy Skills	6	0.21%
Practice Training: Advocacy Skills 2	9	0.31%
Practice Training: Appeals	14	0.48%
Practice Training: Child Development	23	0.79%
Practice Training: Children's Hearings	28	0.96%
Practice Training: Civil Evidence	12	0.41%
Practice Training: Criminal Evidence	11	0.38%
PRACTICE TRAINING: Domestic Abuse Training	18	0.62%
Practice Training: Enhanced Court Training: Boast Your Confidence	7	0.24%
Practice Training: Ethos and Procedure	6	0.21%
PRACTICE TRAINING: Evidence	5	0.17%
Practice Training: Good Decision Making	12	0.41%
PRACTICE TRAINING: Harmful Sexual Behaviour	110	3.77%
Practice Training: JII/VW Training	23	0.79%
Practice Training: Preparation for Proof	17	0.58%
Practice Training: Principles and Structure	25	0.86%
Practice Training: Section 67 Grounds training	15	0.51%
Practice Training: Statement of Grounds - decision making and drafting	17	0.58%
PRACTICE TRAINING: UNCRC	323	11.07%
Practice Training: UNCRC Part 2	28	0.96%
Health & Safety (Mandatory)	**584**	**20.02%**
An Introduction to Basic First Aid (Mandatory/C)	156	5.35%
Display Screen Equipment Risk Assessment (Mandatory)	27	0.93%
Handling Violence and Aggression at Work (Mandatory/C)	51	1.75%
RoSPA: An Introduction to Health & Safety at Work (Mandatory/C)	98	3.36%
RoSPA: Fire Prevention and Evacuation	3	0.10%
RoSPA: Fire Safety and Evacuation (Mandatory/C)	59	2.02%
RoSPA: Safe Manual Handling (Mandatory/C)	49	1.68%
RoSPA: Slips Trips and Falls (Mandatory/C)	50	1.71%
Staying Safe with DSE - An Overview (Mandatory/C)	91	3.12%
Trauma Training	**507**	**17.38%**
Breach Prevention	**432**	**14.81%**
Inclusion & Diversity	**240**	**8.23%**
Active Bystander Training	46	1.58%
Diversity, Equality and Discrimination (Mandatory)	25	0.86%
Imposter Syndrome Training	27	0.93%
Inclusive Behaviours Training	52	1.78%
National Autistic Society Conference	1	0.03%
Neurodivergence and the Menopause	1	0.03%
Neurodiversity - Autism	1	0.03%
Neurodiversity - Dyslexia	1	0.03%
Neurodiversity - Tourettes	1	0.03%

Neurodiversity FASD	1	0.03%
Pronoun Awareness	65	2.23%
Trans Awareness training	9	0.31%
Unconscious Bias Training (Mandatory)	10	0.34%
Operational Development	**91**	**3.12%**
Court Training - Reporters	5	0.17%
Court Training - Support Staff	13	0.45%
CSAS Induction Training for Reporters	1	0.03%
Hearings/PHPs - Reporters & Asst Reporters	11	0.38%
Non Disclosure Training	26	0.89%
Non Disclosure Training - LSA	9	0.31%
Non Disclosure Training - Reporters	12	0.41%
Pronoun Awareness	1	0.03%
Referrals - Reporters	4	0.14%
Referrals - Support Staff	7	0.24%
Trainee Reporter Training - CSAS	2	0.07%
General e-learning	**66**	**2.26%**
Corporate Induction	**58**	**1.99%**
Health & Wellbeing	**49**	**1.68%**
Recruitment & Selection	**40**	**1.37%**
Health & Safety	**34**	**1.17%**
Cyber Security	**30**	**1.03%**
Procurement	**28**	**0.96%**
Coaching & Mentoring	**14**	**0.48%**
GDPR Refresher	**11**	**0.38%**
Management Development	**9**	**0.31%**
Skills Training	**6**	**0.21%**
Management	**4**	**0.14%**
Data Protection	**3**	**0.10%**
General eLearning	**1**	**0.03%**
Digital	**1**	**0.03%**
Grand Total	**2917**	**100.00%**

Personal Development Plans

	Performance Objective	Personal Learning Objective		Sum:
EAST AND CENTRAL SCOTLAND	27	28	188	243
HEAD OFFICE	8	4	86	98
NORTH WEST	7	11	150	168
Sum:	**42**	**43**	**424**	**509**

EAST AND CENTRAL SCO

	Performance Objective	Personal Learning Objective		Sum:
AYRSHIRE			40	40
CENTRAL		1	34	35
LANARKSHIRE	11	10	45	66
SOUTH EAST	7	8	32	47
TAYSIDE	9	9	38	56
	27	**28**	**189**	**244**

HEAD OFFICE

	Performance Objective	Personal Learning Objective		Sum:
EXECUTIVE			1	1
PRACTICE & POLICY			25	25
SUPPORT SERVICES	8	4	60	72
	8	**4**	**86**	**98**

NORTH WEST

	Performance Objective	Personal Learning Objective		Sum:
GLASGOW		4	48	52
GRAMPIAN	1	1	30	32
HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS		1	24	25
STRATHCLYDE NORTH	6	5	48	59
	7	**11**	**150**	**168**

SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Head of Service   **Susan Deery, Head of Human Resources**

Date: 9ᵗʰ April 2025

Report Author: Sarah Wood, I&D Manager

Recommendation:

To approve the introduction of a mandatory EDI learning objective(s) for all leaders/managers.

Reason for Report: Noting and Approval

Resource Implications: Time

Strategy/Service Plan Implications   People Strategy/Inclusion and Equalities Action Plan

Consultation: Principal Reporter/CE/Head of Human Resources

EHRIA Duties: n/a

Document Classification: [Not protectively marked)

1.   Introduction

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) are fundamental principles that underpin a thriving and innovative workplace. As leaders within the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA), it is imperative that LRMs, LSMs, and people managers champion these values to foster a culture of respect, collaboration, and excellence. The Inclusive Standards and Behaviours Framework (ISBF) further supports our mission by providing clear guidelines for promoting EDI within our organisation. Having knowledgeable and skilled leaders/people managers is pivotal in achieving our ambitions related to EDI, ensuring that these principles are deeply embedded in our daily practices and organisational culture.

2.   Objective

The mandatory EDI learning objective aims to equip managers with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and implement EDI practices effectively. Encouraging managers to engage in regular EDI training, self-reflection, and feedback mechanisms should ensure continuous personal and professional growth.

3.   Implementation

Managers will be expected to set and pursue self-directed EDI personal learning objectives to ensure continuous personal and professional growth in this area. This includes, but is not limited to, understanding the importance of EDI, recognising and addressing biases, promoting cultural awareness and understanding the challenges faced by historically marginalised groups, and creating an inclusive environment where all employees feel valued and empowered. The objective(s) will further advance and embed the principles of the ISBF. The objective(s) should be set through the existing Development and Supervision Framework. There is e-learning available on SCRA's learning platform and SCRA will be organising Active Bystander Training for those managers who have not yet been able to attend. This should be view as mandatory training. Additionally, by registering with enei, managers will have access to a wide variety of learning/podcasts/webinars and reading material that would support their learning.

4.   Conclusion and Recommendations

By embracing continuous EDI learning, LRMs, LSMs, and People Managers within SCRA will contribute to a more dynamic, innovative, and harmonious workplace. This commitment to EDI should not only enhance employee satisfaction and retention but also drive organisational success.

EMT are asked to ensure that their managers in each of their areas set at least one EDI learning objective for 2025/26 in the upcoming annual development meeting as part of the Development and Supervision Framework. This is to be recorded on their personal development plan on Itrent.

SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION

Family Expenses

Accountable Director: Chief Executive/Principal Reporter   **Date:** 7 May 2025

Report Author: Head of Finance and Resources

Recommendation:

1. **To approve the change in approach to family expenses**

Reason for Report: For approval

Resource Implications: Outwith approved budgets

Strategy: Within approved plans

Consultation: Executive Management Team
Finance Team

Equalities Duties: An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

Document Classification: Not Protectively Marked

Introduction

1   Since SCRA's inception, the travel and occasional subsistence expenses incurred by families and their children to attend hearings ("family expenses") have been borne by Local Authorities. In many locality offices, to make claiming as easy as possible for hearing attendees, families are reimbursed directly by SCRA staff from petty cash: SCRA then invoices the Local Authority for reimbursement. Occasionally, SCRA will book travel on behalf of the family using corporate credit card (GPC), and again invoice the Local Authority for reimbursement.

2   Forty-nine family expenses invoices and credit notes were issued in 24/25, to 15 different Local Authorities, totalling £6.9k. The majority of this value (65%) was to Glasgow.

Glasgow	£4,479.95
Renfrewshire	£904.70
Argyll and Bute	£444.22
Angus	£408.42
Inverclyde	£195.50
East Renfrewshire	£93.40
Highland	£86.70
Perth & Kinross	£86.66
Dundee	£72.47
Aberdeen City	£65.40
West Dunbartonshire	£39.90
Aberdeenshire	£35.72
Eilean Siar	£35.10
City of Edinburgh	£10.00
Fife	-£49.34
Grand Total	**£6,908.80**

3   Invoices are manually issued by the Finance team using eFinancials data. This data is derived from LSMs' GPC and petty cash logs. After invoice issue, some local authorities require a purchase order, and some local authorities require further back-up evidence, including child and family data and/or confirmation that we have adhered to the local authority's own policies. Some invoices take a number of months to agree, often due to a lack of clear process within the local authority's internal teams. In the past, some invoices have been written off as irrecoverable due to evidence being insufficient for local authorities to pay on. Some spend is miscoded in the ledger requiring adjustment invoices/credit notes to local authorities.

Proposal

4   Given the relatively small value, and relatively high administrative overhead placed on LSMs and the Finance team, **it is proposed that SCRA stops issuing invoices to local authorities for family expenses, and starts bearing those costs**. For 25/26, localities can seek additional budget in-year if this proposal creates a resource pressure, and from 26/27 onwards, these costs can be factored into budget-setting process. If approved, it is proposed that this change in approach be communicated locally through existing communication channels, in addition to a formal communication to council finance teams.

Benefits of the proposed approach

5 • SCRA can start to exercise full control over a single families expenses policy. SCRA previously followed different local authorites' policies, and recently implemented a standard mileage reimbursement rate. This and other policies remain at risk of being challenged by a local authority and, if so, may lead to a "postcode lottery" for families. The proposed approach removes this risk.

• SCRA can unilaterally use its discretion over unusual cases. Currently, an unusual (expensive) case requires sometimes protracted discussions with local authorities on what they will and will not reimburse. The proposed approach streamlines the decision-making process for faster and more proportionate child-centred decision-making.

• LSMs currently have to meet the local authorities' record-keeping requirements, sometimes more onerous than SCRA's own. This proposal gives SCRA freedom to relax those requirements where they are excessive.

• SCRA Finance team capacity is freed up for other, more value-adding activity.

• SCRA can demonstrate to stakeholders a public purse efficiency by removing unnecessary intra-public body invoicing.

6 **Risks of the proposed approach, and mitigations**

6.1 **Local Authorities disengage from the Children's Hearings System.** This proposal may be seen by some local authorities as excusing them from their responsibilities to children and families or sidelining their role.

In areas where this is considered a material risk, early local communication through existing multi-partner dialogue structures (e.g. CHIPs) will ensure all parties are clear on what the change means, and what is not changing.

6.2 **Spend escalates and becomes burdensome for SCRA**. This may be incremental as volumes increase, and/or there may be one or two particularly expensive cases that SCRA would now default to bearing the cost of.

On the evidence of the last few years, including pre-COVID years, this is unlikely, and manageable within existing resources as it arises. Spend on family expenses will be monitored as part of existing budget monitoring process, and EMT can revise this approach if spend significantly escalates.

6.3 **Families, SCRA staff and local authority staff are unclear on the expenses process, leading to a poorer service for families.** The proposal will explicitly result in a mixed approach across the country: in some areas, local authorities will bear the cost of families' expenses, while SCRA meets these costs in others. This could lead to confusion for SCRA and local authority staff administering the process, and therefore confusion for the families claiming.

3

Early and clear communication with local authorities would make it clear that none of the on-the-ground processes for reimbursing families are changing as a result of this proposal. LSMs would still keep adequate records of transactions, as they would for any other petty cash or GPC transaction.

6.4 **Other Local Authorities who currently administer most or all of their families expenses – i.e. those authorities not listed above, and those listed above who are invoiced only a very small amount – seek to change existing processes so that SCRA starts to administer family expenses in their area.** Councils facing resource pressures may seek to shift this burden to SCRA if they view this as an opportunity to save time/resources.

To combat this, SCRA needs to be ready to robustly challenge back against any such proposal that does not demonstrably lead to a better service for children and families, again via existing multi-partner dialogue strcutures.

Glasgow

7 Glasgow represents 65% of family expenses spend, and has a well-defined internal process, meaning it is one of the easier local authorities to work with. The proposed approach could be adapted such that Glasgow is the *only* local authority we seek reimbursement from. This would mean that around 90% of the administrative burden is still removed, but the cost to SCRA is less than £3k p.a. rather than £7k.

8 This approach is not recommended. The financial burden of Glasgow's family expenses is still small in the context of the locality budget, and insignificant in the context of SCRA's operating budget as a whole. Additionally, such a decision would be challenging to defend to Glasgow City Council on fairness grounds, whereas the proposal as it stands – a blanket absorption of family expenses where SCRA currently administers them – is easier to defend and implement.

Recommendation

9 EMT is asked to approve the proposed approach to 2025/26 family expenses, i.e. SCRA will inform councils that SCRA will no longer be seeking reimbursement for family expenses currently administered on their behalf.

A meeting of the **SCRA Audit and Assurance Committee (AAC)** will be held
on **Tuesday, 27th of May 2025 at 10.30am via MS Teams**

Jim Edgar, Chair

AGENDA

Item	Topic	Lead	Decision	Timings
1.	Welcome, Apologies and Confirmation of Quorum			
2.	Declaration (s) of Interest (s)			
3.	Minute of SCRA Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held on Thursday 21st November 2024	Chair	For Approval	
4.	Matters Arising from Minute of Tuesday 25th February 2025 Matters Arising from Action Log	Chair		
5.	Workplan	Chair		
6.	**Audit and Assurance Committee**			
6.1	Annual Report 2024-25	Head F&R	For Approval	
7.	**Quality Assurance**			
7.1	Quality Assurance Report on the Reporter's Obligations Under UNCRC Article 12	QA Manager	For Approval	
7.2	Progress Report	QA Manager	For Approval	
8.	**Eternal Audit**			
8.1	General update on current issues	Audit Scotland	For Noting	
9.	**Internal Audit**			
9.1	Follow Up Report	BDO	For Approval	
9.2	Annual Report 2024-25	BDO	For Approval	
10.	**Topical/Regulatory/Governance Issues**			
11.	**Other**			
11.1	Accounting Policies	Head F&R	For noting	
12.	**Risk Management**			
12.3	Strategic Risk Register		For noting	
12.4	New Risks			
13.	**Summary of key issues and escalations to be reported to the Board**			
	Close			

Date of next meeting: 28th August 2025

SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Portfolio Management – Current State Assessment

Head of Service: Lisa Bennett, Head of Strategy

Date: 7th May 2025

Report Author: Andrew   Macdonald,   Planning   and
                                    Performance Manager

Recommendation:
1. EMT to note the report. 2. EMT to consider the options for progressing with portfolio management. 3. EMT is recommended to approve Option 2

Reason for Report: For discussion

Resource Implications: Budget to be assessed

Strategy/Service Plan Implications: Corporate   Plan,   Business   Plan   and
                                    related strategies

Consultation:

EHRIA Duties: Will be required for projects

Document Classification: Not protectively marked

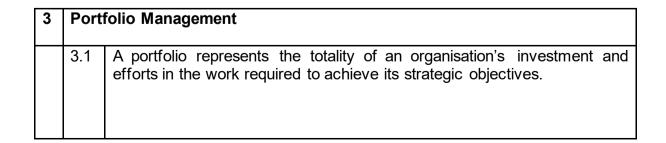| 1	**Introduction**
1.1	This paper sets out the findings of the current state assessment as part of exploring the implementation of portfolio management within SCRA.
1.2	EMT approved the approach and related timeline for the work on 5th March 2025.

	1.3	The proposed approach consisted of three phases, the first of which – the initial phase is running from March to the end of May. This phase consists of:

- Assessing our current state: How are we operating? What lessons and best practice can we take from our current programme approach?
- Determining the scope of our future portfolio framework
- Defining SCRA's vision for portfolio management
- Defining SCRA's objectives for portfolio management

This paper and the related decisions will determine the next steps.

	1.4	The assessment is not a value judgement of the quality of work to date, but a record of what is observable through desktop review or what was fed back by respondents.

2	**Executive Summary**	
	2.1	SCRA has an established and high functioning Programme framework overseeing the delivery of our Care, Connect & Protect Programmes as well as the development and delivery of our Target Operating Model (TOM) that will bring them all together.
	2.2	The organisation has improved its position over the last few years and now has good, if not complete visibility of the breadth of work ongoing. However, there is a body of work, strategies and plans at various levels throughout the organisation without a clear view or understanding of the interdependencies, constraints or actions between them.
	2.3	The most pressing areas of weakness for SCRA as identified in the current state assessment are management of dependencies, resilience, capacity planning and prioritisation. Whilst there are areas where these issues are being addressed, the approach is not uniform or consistent organisationally.
	2.4	Learning from peer organisations, it is recommended that SCRA takes an "Evolution" approach to implementation of portfolio management, focussing firstly on the areas of most pressing concern (resilience, capacity planning and prioritisation).

3	**Portfolio Management**	
	3.1	A portfolio represents the totality of an organisation's investment and efforts in the work required to achieve its strategic objectives.

	3.2	To this end, portfolio management is a series of strategic processes and decision taken together to enable and more effective balance of organisational change and business as usual/operational delivery.
	3.3	Ultimately, the principles and practices of portfolio management should be tailored to reflect the circumstances of the organisation – including its governance, its culture and strategic objectives, its maturity in project and programme management, its track record of delivery and its management of benefits.
	3.4	More about the benefits of implementing portfolio management within an organisation can be found in **Appendix 1**.

4	**Assessment of Current State – Desktop Review**	
	4.1	The purpose of the desktop review was to capture at a high level, the range and spread of strategies, plans, groups and frameworks generating, leading or informing work and effort across the organisation. As a caveat, this may be incomplete but the visual in **Appendix 2** represents the totality of what the assessment could find in evidence.
	4.2	The identified strategies, plans, groups and frameworks can broadly be grouped into seven tiers: - *Corporate:* The highest level of direction with SCRA's Mission, Vision, Values and Corporate Plan. - *Strategic*: Annual Business Plan, Equalities Outcomes and functional strategies (14). - *Programme*: Programme framework covering Connect, Care and Protect Programmes, the Target Operating Model, Benefits Framework and Change Team. - *Tactical*: 10 Groups covering cross-functional organisational matters with 11 related subgroups. - *Operational*: 9 Locality Plans with 5 team plans and an operational framework which impact cross-functional delivery. - *Additional Drivers*: Areas which may generate work for the organisation or are existing parts of the organisation whose outputs may develop further work (Research). These include legislation, and SCRA's partnerships.
	4.3	**Alignment** There is evidence from the documents available that effort has been made where possible to align functional strategies to the Corporate Plan.

Likewise, alignment between action plans (where available) and their respective strategy or overarching plan is good in most places, so the vertical alignment from operations back up to the Corporate Plan can be traced and seen easily. This was reflected in recent audit of the Programme conducted by the Scottish Government's Portfolio, Programme and Project Assurance Hub.

However, there is more limited horizontal alignment between most functional strategies or between the plans. This may be partially due to how plans and strategies have historically been developed – but it does not provide a holistic view of how much of this work sits in the broader context outside of its delivery of an aspect of the corporate plan.

This issue is less apparent in the Programme with efforts being made to align work areas both with the corporate plan and with one another, with more evident linkages within the tier, as would be expected, but also better visibility and interconnectivity out to other tiers.

It is worth noting that the view looking out from the Programme may be clearer than for those looking in, particularly from the operational level.

| | 4.4 | **Prioritisation:** |

There is no consistent method or means of prioritising the actions across the strategies and plans. Whilst the tiers in **Appendix 2** are grouped, it is not possible to prioritise the activities, groups, plans or strategies therein. There have been efforts within the Programme to prioritise, but there is not significant evidence of documented prioritisation happening outside of the Programme or on a consistent basis.

| | 4.5 | **Cadence:** |

There does not appear to be a consistent or standardised method for reviewing, assessing and refining strategies and plans. This may be happening, but it this was not seen within the desktop review. This is made more difficult by the timescales over which some of the plans occur. For example:
- Corporate Plan runs 2024 to 2027
- Digital Strategy runs 2025 to 2027
- People Strategy runs 2024 to 2027
- Finance Strategy runs 2025 to 2030
- Target Operating Model horizons run to 2030
- SCRA's obligations for zero waste and net zero run to 2030 and 2045 respectively

The lack of cadence makes it more difficult to ensure consistent alignment and effective distribution of resources within capacity to deliver the outcomes required for each area.

| | 4.6 | **Actions and Dependencies:** |

Not all the functional strategies have associated action plans, at least, none that were found. This makes it hard to map dependencies and to understand the skills and capacities required to deliver the strategies.

There are also challenges within the operational tier, where locality plans are developed incorporating anticipated support or resource from other teams without involving relevant peers, meaning there is limited or no sight of constraints and dependencies, which can impact delivery of the plan. It is also unclear which of the groups are generating actions, the time being spent on these, or the impact these actions are having.

	4.7	**Status:** Not all strategies are live, some are in draft – others have lapsed. Likewise with plans and groups across tiers – it is not always clear or evident what is live, what is in progress and what is no longer active.

5	**Assessment of Current State – Semi-structured interviews**	
	5.1	Semi-structured interviews were held with EMT members and the Programme Manager to gather views and insights as to how senior management currently view
	5.2	**Appendix 3** summarises the feedback received.
	5.3	Across all questions, respondents were clear that SCRA has improved over recent years, but there are still areas of weakness – predominantly around dependencies, resilience, capacity planning and prioritisation.

6	**Assessment of Current State – Learning from others**	
	6.1	As part of the assessment, lessons and insight were sought from external bodies who are involved in or are currently implementing a portfolio management approach.
	6.2	Meetings were held (separately) with Andrew Jones (**AJ**), Project Delivery Partnering Lead (Programme & Project Management Centre of Expertise – Scot Gov) and Ailsa McIntosh (**AM**), Portfolio Team Manager (Social Security Scotland).
	6.3	AJ advised there is a mixed approach to and application of portfolio management across Scottish Government directorates and other NDPBs. There is not one set model being applied however the Centre of Expertise is seeking to apply some consistency. Whilst there was not significant value gained for the immediate discussion, AJ provided resources to support SCRA in its approach and learning.

	6.4	AM covered Social Security Scotland's implementation of portfolio management, which commenced in August 2024.
	6.5	Social Security Scotland have not gone for a full implementation of the portfolio management approach, rather a tailored approach focussed on their areas of highest need – specifically capacity planning (including prioritisation of work) and risk.
	6.6	This approach has been well received, with the capacity planning aspect providing clarity on where people are, what they are working on, and how much they could realistically take on. This was facilitated by the creation of tools to support decision making. In the first instance, tables showing people's capacity, not only at the present time, but over the longer-term span.
	6.7	By having clarity about capacity, SSS have found this approach to been useful in creating justifications for recruitment.
	6.8	Less successfully, AM reported that terminology has been a challenge and blocker, but that is being addressed and that SSS were still not strong on the tracking of benefits, but that this is an area of development.
	6.9	Both AJ and AM have been in contact since and will continue to be points of contact for the organisation, should the implementation of portfolio management go forward.

7	**Options Appraisal**	
	7.1	In summary, the current state assessment has identified a broad range of strategies, plans and groups guiding the efforts and outputs of the organisation. EMT have a good, if not entirely clear view of the work but less of a clear understanding of the capacities, dependencies and interconnectivity of the activities ongoing, some of which present resilience risks for both the organisation and for the individuals involved in certain roles. This is in addition to an absence of a consistent, Administration wide approach to prioritisation and deprioritisation of activities.
	7.2	The organisation is operating from a good place with its Programme framework which is iteratively improving as projects deliver and learn more, and the understanding of the programme approach becomes more embedded within SCRA.
	7.3	Were SCRA to proceed with implementing portfolio management, it would be anticipated that it would provide clarity to EMT to understand what, where and how things are happening but also provide greater clarity for everyone else in the organisation as to what is happening, and how it will be resourced. It should enable the organisation to look at all contributory

work areas and see the alignment between areas to avoid friction points, duplication or over capacity.

7.4 To that end, there are three possible options for EMT to consider on how they may wish to proceed. (**Note**: *The third approach from **Appendix 4** (Ad hoc) has been dismissed from consideration as it would be a regression from the best practice of our programme approach.*)

7.5 **Option 1: Do nothing**

The organisation is on a positive trajectory and the Programme framework is a key component of that. Further improvements and efficiencies are anticipated by the implementation and continuous improvement of the target operating model which in turn, will enable capacity to be freed up to be more targeted to key activities and strategic outcomes.

If the current visibility of activities is sufficient, if current issues are not seen as insurmountable, and are not viewed to be infringing on the ability of the organisation to deliver its outcomes, then no change is required.

However, this would not solve the standing challenges of resilience, capacity or prioritisation in the short to medium term.

7.6 **Option 2: Evolution**

Taking an evolutionary approach enables the organisation to take a staged and incremental approach focussing on specific processes to demonstrate the value of the portfolio management approach. In this case, to build on the successes and positives gained from the Programme whilst focussing on the areas of most significant need – namely, capacity planning, resilience, prioritisation and dependencies.

As part of the evolutionary approach, the organisation can undertake a cadencing exercise. Establish alignment between strategies, consider whether all plans and groups are still valid and fit for purpose in line with our corporate plan and target operating model.

Taking this approach would be consistent with SCRA's attitude to projects – discover, test, iterate and implement. A targeted evolutionary approach would be a quicker option that Option 3 in both implementation and the realisation of potential benefits.

Based on learning from others, this approach has been seen to be both impactful and successful – however – the implementation would need to be mindful of new and additional terminology being introduced into the general lexicon of the organisation, potentially creating a challenge and a blocker.

	7.7	**Option 3: Big bang**
		Bring in a full portfolio approach with its defined governance structure and processes. This is usually the most appropriate approach where the environment is relatively stable and where the project and programme management frameworks within the organisation are relatively mature.
		Whilst this would be the most comprehensive option, in the complexion of current circumstance, this may not be the most beneficial model to apply at this moment in time and would be a slower process than that suggested in Option 2.
		Per best practice (**Appendix 4**), this would require viewing the implementation as a business change programme, planned with: • A business case • A compelling vision for the future state • A blueprint or target operating model • An implementation plan agreed by the management board
		This would be in addition to all ongoing work and would need close and careful management to avoid running in conflict with the implementation of the target operating model.
		A comprehensive framework could be achieved over time through the evolutionary approach (option 2) as value is derived from the new approach and understanding and support grows for portfolio management. More aspects can be added and iterated as appropriate, but not all at once.
	7.8	**Recommendation:** It is recommended that EMT pursue Option 2 - Evolution

8	**Next Steps**
8.1	Once EMT have agreed a preferred option, a revised timeline and plan with vision, scope and objectives will be submitted for approval.

9	**Appendices**
9.1	1. Appendix 1 – Benefits of Portfolio Management 2. Appendix 2 – Desktop Review Visual 3. Appendix 3 – Summary of Responses 4. Appendix 4 – Approaches to Implementing Portfolio Management

Appendix 1
Benefits of Portfolio Management

1. **To optimise demand**
   a. Demand (almost) always outstrips capacity to deliver. Staff feel extremely busy and not well sighted on all aspect of work ongoing within the organisation.
   b. Portfolio management links projects and programmes to objectives, providing insight to enable business as usual and change to be balanced across the organisation.

2. **To optimise resource**
   a. Projects and programmes are typically constrained by resource and/or time pressures – especially in environments where public commitments are made to deliver a project, programme or improvement by X date.
   b. It enables resource supply and demand to be forecast and aligned with organisational priorities, whilst maintaining the capacity for business as usual/operational delivery.

3. **To define governance**
   a. Outside of the Programme, projects/initiatives are not always baselined; without knowing when they will end, we cannot plan start dates beyond what is in-flight or what the resource will move to after the work is completed.
   b. Having a consistent and well communicated governance framework enables assurance, risk management, benefits management and capacity planning to occur in a holistic manner.

4. **To improve communications & engagement**
   a. When demand outstrips supply for resource, the priority order of initiatives must be clearly communicated to enable team managers to allocate work effectively.
   b. Portfolio management increases the visibility of in-flight and upcoming work, facilitating improved communication and clarity on strategy and priorities.

5. **Confirm Value & Outcomes**
   a. Setting the baseline of outcomes or value to be achieved by a project through a benefits management framework interlinked with project/programme governance – improves the reporting, tracking and confirmation that outcomes have been achieved.

Appendix 2
Desktop Review Visual

CORPORATE

- Vision
- Mission
- Values

Corporate Plan

Governance

Board

Subcommittees

EMT

STRATEGIC

Annual Business Plan

Functional Strategies

Digital	People	Practice & Policy Strategy	Property Strategy	*Sustainability Strategy*
Comms & Engagement	Finance & Resources	Rights Inclusion & Corporate Parenting	Change Management Strategy	*QI & Change Strategy*
Wellbeing Strategy	*Procurement Strategy*	**Equalities Outcomes**	Cyber Security Strategy	**Quality Framework**

Programme Board

PROGRAMME

Strategic Programme Group

Care

Keeping the Promise

Protect

Hearings	*Role of the Reporter*
Referrals	*Early Engagement on Grounds*
Court	

Target Operating Model

Connect

Benefits Management Framework

Change Team

TACTICAL

Inclusion & Diversity Steering Group

Inclusion Ambassadors	*Disability sub-group*
Locality EDI leads	*Race & Ethnicity subgroup*
LGBT sub-group	*Neurodiversity Champions*

Equalities Review Group

HR sub-group

Health & Wellbeing

Mental Wealth

Strategic Sustainability Group

Environmental Ambassadors

Digital Engagement Group

Digital Change Authorisation Board

Digital Champions

Practice & Quality Network

Planning & Performance Network

LRM Network

Court Management Network

Participation Group

OPERATIONAL

Locality Plans

Ayrshire	Central	Glasgow
Grampian	Highland & Islands	Lanarkshire, D&G
N Strathclyde	South East	Tayside & Fife

OD Team Plan

Corporate Parenting Plan

CSAS Development Pipeline

BSL Plan

Learning & Development Plan

AST Operational Framework

ADDITIONAL DRIVERS

Legislation

Partnerships

Research

Key: Draft | Lapsed

Appendix 3
Summary of Responses

Question	Yes	No	Partly	Summary of Responses
1. Do you feel there is a clear view of the current breadth of work ongoing within the organisation?			X	There is a good, if not entirely clear view. We have a better idea of the major pieces of work, but we lack an organisational view of what work is going on. There is a better understanding of the breadth, but perhaps not the depth of work ongoing but the connectivity, dependency and degree of integration between areas of work is still quite unclear. At EMT and Programme Board level, it is felt that the work is well trailed and communicated allowing for better visibility than for the organisation, as a whole.
2. Given SCRA's strategic aims, are all the programmes, projects and business as usual activities we are undertaking within our current 'portfolio' of work necessary?			X	Respondents thought "necessary" may be a high bar – and perhaps not all of the work was necessary but that it does have value toward the organisation is trying to achieve. The consequence of this is that there may be "too many pots on the boil". Programme work cited as an example where it is easier to say work is necessary, less able at the business as usual/operational end of things. Some concern that the clarity of aligning the work to the strategic aims is becoming "hazier".
3. Are we confident that the initiatives being undertaken and investments being made will achieve our strategic aims?	X			A consistent sense of confidence was seen in the responses. The degree to how confident respondents are of achieving the aims, is less apparent. Some answers pointed to some initiatives still being seen as standalone – and that more holistic view to illustrate the future state would be beneficial.
4. What is our visibility and control of dependencies between these areas?			X	Respondents felt that this was an improving area, but that there was still a way to go. Concerns about the line of sight for and management of dependencies was still a weakness and that the resilience of and our management of them was impacted by multiple single points of failure in the organisation's structure. Again, the Programme was noted as an area handling this well, however it was felt there was a weakness in the read across to other strategies and plans. Communications between teams and individuals could be improved to highlight potential dependencies at an earlier stage, also to promote knowledge sharing.
5. Do we have a consistent way of assessing and scoring the priority and achievability of potential work/projects? Do we make collective decisions about that?			X	Again, the Programme is the example whereby we have a means of prioritisation which has been used. However, the regularity and consistency with which this is applied is less clear. Any work which is to be initiated comes to either the Programme Board or EMT with a rationale, but there is not a set way of scoring the priorities. Some of the organisation's priorities are imposed upon them, by legislation or other external challenges (such as challenges in the hearings system) but from a business-as-usual perspective we are not strong at sizing and scoring initiatives or work we wish to undertake. Equal in challenge is how, what and when to deprioritise certain pieces of work – what is not urgent, what can wait.
6. Is the allocation of funds and resources staged and linked to performance?		X		This not something the organisation currently does; performance is not used in this context. The aim is to allocate and scale work to the resources that we have available.
7. Are our resource demands and supply matched? i.e. Do we have the right people, with the right skills, at the right time to deliver the work?			X	The organisation is naturally constrained by the resources available and in some areas we have single individuals with the appropriate knowledge and skills which creates single points of failure and potential resilience issues. However, significant efforts have been made to ensure the right people and skills are deployed correctly at the appropriate time. This is a challenge for some people adopting new roles or ways of working. There is work to do to increase the skills and confidence of staff to both engage with and participate in the change currently happening in the organisation.
8. Does our current reporting approach provide clear line of sight on delivery and impact (both for our projects/programmes and/or for our business-as-usual activity)?			X	It is felt that the quality of reporting is very good, but some challenge around the volume of reports being received was noted. This may be partly due to EMT also functioning as the Programme Board, and as such, as seeing a higher than conventional volume of information. Separate however was the challenge that reports are providing assurance that things are happening, but are they necessarily the right things? – less clarity provided about whether resources and time are being expended appropriately – "too much noise". Support expressed for Zoho, with proper utilisation, and with the OPR. Challenge to define what the "right" level of information is.
9. Do we have a clear view of our track record in delivering projects?			X	This is an area of improvement, with the current approach being much more successful than in years previous. Some respondents still felt that this area was "patchy", but that we are getting better at capturing and applying lessons. The benefits framework and quality improvement work were noted as areas which will evolve as they embed and become more familiar and directly feed our ambitions to use, learn and improve from our track record going forward. Sentiment was that SCRA is good at statutory change and our record but we perhaps haven't embedded enough lessons from those experiences.
10. Are we clear about the difference that portfolio management could make to the organisation?			X	Respondents are looking for portfolio management to provide clarity to EMT to understand what, where and how things are happening but also provide greater clarity for everyone else in the organisation for what is happening, when and how it will be resourced. It should enable the organisation to look at all contributory work areas and see the alignment between areas to avoid friction points, duplication or over capacity. The ability to prioritise and deprioritise with more rigour and enable decision making on more 'thorny issues' if and when they arise with a strategic response – e.g. we aren't doing A because we are doing B. All respondents noted the evolution to where the organisation is now and the basis that provides to consider evolving again into a portfolio model.

Appendix 4
Approaches to Implementing Portfolio Management

1. Big Bang	Implementing portfolio management is viewed as a business change programme in its own right and is planned with: • A business case • A compelling vision for the future state • A blueprint or target operating model • An implementation plan agreed by the management board Here a time-bound implementation phase is followed by live running and encompassing all portfolio definition and delivery practices.
2. Evolution	Here a more evolutionary or incremental approach is taken, starting with areas of greatest need or those where rapid progress can be made. The organisation's approach to portfolio management then evolves to reflect its needs, opportunities and lessons learned.
3. Ad hoc	As with the evolutionary approach, there is no detailed master plan, but there is no expectation that the approach will develop and no commitment to capturing lessons learned to inform development. Instead, implementation is more opportunistic.

(**Source** - *Axelos: Management of Portfolios*)